

## **Does the Qur'ān contain words which are not Arabic?**

There is no disagreement among the Arabs that the Qur'ān contains words composed in a non-Arabic mode and names of people which are not Arabic, like *Isrā'il*, *Jibrīl*, *'Imrān*, *Nūh* and *Lūt*. They disagree about whether there are words other than proper names which are non-Arabic. Qādī Ibn at-Tayyib, at-Tabarī and others believe that there are no non-Arabic words in it and the Qur'ān is pure Arabic, and whatever words which are found in it ascribed to other languages happen to be common to both, and so the Arabs, Persians, Abyssinians and others used them. Some claim that non-Arabic words exist in the Qur'ān but that since they are so few that does not preclude the Qur'ān being pure Arabic and the Prophet from speaking the language of his people. *Mishkāt* (24:35) is a niche, *nasha'a* means “to rise in the night” as in “*nāshi'ata'l-layl*” (73:6), *qaswara* (74:51) is a lion and *kiflatayn* (57:28) means “double”. These are found in Abyssinian. *Ghassāq*

(38:57) means “foul” in Turkish. *Qistās* (17:35; 26:182) means “balance” in Greek. *Sijjil* (21:104; 15:74; 105:4) means “stones” in Persian. *Tūr* (2:63; 2:93, etc.) is a mountain and *yamm* (7:136. etc.) means sea in Syriac. *Tannūr* (11:40; 23:27) is the surface of the earth in Persian.

Ibn ‘Atiyya said, “The truth about the expression of these words is that their origin is foreign, but the Arabs used them and Arabicised them and so they are Arabic. When the Qur’ān was revealed in their language, the Arabs had mixed with other languages via trade and travel.” And Allah knows best.